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ABSTRACT

This book champions the importance of chairing an academic department (or division) and focuses attention on the strategies "excellent" chairs use in building a positive work environment for faculty and releasing individual faculty potential. The framework is based on human, organizational, and career development; systems theory; and interpersonal communications. The "excellent" chairs are 200 individuals on 70 campuses who were nominated by chief academic officers and faculty development specialists. In part I, several difficulties chairs encounter in building a positive work environment for promoting faculty growth and professional development are introduced. A self-assessment inventory is presented, followed by three chapters outlining 15 chair strategies, organized around the themes of chairperson self-development, role as an academic leader, and interpersonal relations with faculty. Part II applies the strategies, first as a series of processes for addressing specific faculty situations and second as a general guide for building a positive work environment. The strategies include: helping newly hired faculty become adjusted; improving the teaching performance of faculty; improving the scholarship of faculty; refocusing faculty efforts; and addressing personal issues. A synopsis of a national project on academic department chairpersons is offered in an appendix. (67 references.) (JDD)

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